

Agency Leadership Involvement and Accountability

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Agency Head

Requirements

The head of each agency has responsibility for carrying out various agency-level planning and reporting requirements. This includes making the agency's strategic plans, performance plans, and performance reporting updates available on the agency's website. 5 U.S.C. § 306(a); 31 U.S.C. §§ 1115(b), 1116(a).

The agency head also has responsibilities related to the agency priority goals, including

- identifying those goals;
- conducting quarterly reviews with the chief operating officer, performance improvement officer, and goal leaders of progress made toward those goals; and
- providing information about those goals, and progress made toward them, to OMB for publication on the federal government performance website.

31 U.S.C. §§ 1120(b)(1), 1121(b)(1), 1122(b).

Select Legislative History

For more on the legislative history of the agency head's role, see citations to the legislation concerning the specific planning and reporting activities in which the agency head is involved, as outlined in the Requirements section above.

Related GAO Work

GAO has elaborated on and suggested several practices that support this requirement, including:

- implementing performance management leadership roles and responsibilities under the GPRA Modernization Act ([GAO-13-356](#));
- demonstrating management involvement ([GAO-05-927](#), pp. 19-20); and
- strengthening leadership commitment to creating and sustaining results-oriented management ([GAO-04-38](#), pp. 69-75 and 101-103).

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Chief Operating Officer

Requirements

The agency Chief Operating Officer (COO), who is the deputy head of agency or equivalent, has responsibility for improving the management and performance of the agency, through the use of strategic and performance planning, measurement, analysis, regular assessment of progress, and the use of performance information to achieve the agency's mission and goals. 31 U.S.C. § 1123(a), (b)(1).

Specifically, the COO is to

- advise and assist the head of the agency in carrying out agency-level performance planning and reporting requirements, including the quarterly reviews of progress toward agency priority goals;
- oversee agency-specific efforts to improve management functions within the agency and across the federal government; and
- coordinate and collaborate with relevant personnel, within and external to the agency, who have a significant role in contributing to the achievement of the agency's mission and goals, such as the Chief Financial Officer, Chief Human

Capital Officer, Chief Acquisition Officer/Senior Procurement Executive, Chief Information Officer, and other line of business chiefs at the agency.

31 U.S.C. § 1123(b)(2), (3), (4).

In addition, the COO is responsible for leading the agency's efforts to identify duplicative and outdated agency reporting. 31 U.S.C. § 1125.

Select Legislative History

In 2002, GAO convened a roundtable to discuss the Chief Operating Officer (COO) concept and how it might apply within federal agencies as one strategy to address certain systemic federal governance and management challenges. Participants generally agreed that agency COOs could help increase attention to management issues and transformational change, integrate various key management and transformation efforts, and institutionalize accountability for addressing management issues and leading transformational change. S. Rep. No. 111-372, at 9 (2010).

Two Presidential memoranda—one on October 1, 1993 and an update on July 11, 2001—outlined a COO position within the federal government. Both memoranda provided the COO with responsibilities to improve the management and performance of the agency, and implement the agency mission and goals. The Act keeps those responsibilities and adds others to bring them in line with the planning and reporting requirements provided in this legislation. The Act codifies that the deputy head of an agency, or equivalent, shall be an agency's COO and given overall responsibility for improving the management and performance of the agency. The COO would also assist the head of the agency in carrying out the planning and reporting requirements of this Act, oversee agency-specific efforts to improve management within the agency and across the federal government, and coordinate with relevant personnel within and external to the agency who have a significant role in contributing to the mission and goals of the agency. S. Rep. No. 111-372, at 9-10 (2010).

Both Presidential Memoranda mentioned above also established the President's Management Council (PMC), led by the Deputy Director for Management of OMB and composed of various agency COOs. The PMC has general responsibilities aimed at improving federal government management. Although the Act does not codify the PMC, the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs expected that the management council would continue to exist and continue to be responsible for improving management across the federal government. The PMC could also play an important role in ensuring that relevant agencies and other interagency councils effectively coordinate efforts to achieve the federal government priority goals. S. Rep. No. 111-372, at 10 (2010).

Related GAO Work

GAO has elaborated on and suggested several practices that support this requirement, including:

- implementing COO positions, along with other leadership roles with specific responsibilities under the GPRA Modernization Act ([GAO-13-356](#));
- implementing COO positions in federal agencies ([GAO-08-34](#); [GAO-03-192SP](#));
- demonstrating management involvement ([GAO-05-927](#), pp. 19-20); and
- strengthening leadership commitment to creating and sustaining results-oriented management ([GAO-04-38](#), pp. 69-75 and 101-103).

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Performance Improvement Officer

Requirements

The agency head, in consultation with the COO, is to select an agency senior executive to serve as the agency's Performance Improvement Officer (PIO). The PIO is to provide advice and support to the agency head and agency COO in achieving the agency's mission and goals. The PIO is to report directly to the COO. 31 U.S.C. § 1124(a)(1), (2)(A).

Subject to the direction of the COO, the PIO is to

- advise and assist the agency head and COO to ensure that the mission and goals of the agency are achieved through the use of strategic and performance planning, measurement, analysis, regular assessment of progress, and use of performance information to improve the results achieved;
- advise on the selection of agency goals, including opportunities to collaborate with other agencies on common goals;

- assist in overseeing the agency's implementation of agency strategic planning, performance planning and reporting requirements, including the agency's contributions to federal government priority goals;
- support regular reviews of agency performance, including the quarterly reviews of progress toward agency priority goals; and
- assist in the development and use of performance measures in agency personnel performance appraisals.

31 U.S.C. § 1124(a)(2)(A), (B), (C), (D), (E).

In addition, the PIO is to ensure that agency progress toward the achievement of all goals is communicated to agency leaders, managers and employees, and Congress as well as made available on the agency's website. 31 U.S.C. § 1124(a)(2)(F).

Select Legislative History

The Act establishes in statute the position of a PIO at each agency. The PIO position existed prior to the enactment of the Act in the federal government, having been established by Executive Order 13,450, *Improving Government Program Performance*, on November 13, 2007. 72 Fed. Reg. 64,519. Although the Act codifies parts of the Executive Order into statute, it also makes changes to the responsibilities of a PIO in order to align the position with planning and reporting requirements provided in this legislation. The Act directs the head of each agency to designate a senior executive of the agency as the agency PIO. In requiring that the PIO be selected from among the agency's senior executives, the Act attempts to ensure continuity for this position over time in order to help the agency focus on achieving its long-term goals. This long-term focus is especially important because the tenure of political appointees in top leadership positions within an agency usually lasts only a few years. S. Rep. No. 111-372, at 10 (2010).

Related GAO Work

GAO has elaborated on and suggested several practices that support this requirement, including:

- implementing the PIO position, along with other leadership roles with specific responsibilities under the GPRA Modernization Act ([GAO-13-356](#));
- demonstrating management involvement ([GAO-05-927](#), pp. 19-20); and
- strengthening leadership commitment to creating and sustaining results-oriented management ([GAO-04-38](#), pp. 69-75 and 101-103).

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Goal Leader

Requirements

For each agency performance goal, including each agency priority goal, the goal leader is an agency official responsible for achieving the goal. 31 U.S.C. §§ 1115(b)(5)(E), § 1120(b)(1)(C).

In addition, for agency priority goals the goal leader is to participate in the quarterly reviews conducted by the agency head and chief operating officer of progress toward the goal. 31 U.S.C. § 1121(b)(1).

Select Legislative History

For more on the legislative history of the goal leader's role, see citations to the legislation concerning the specific planning and reporting activities in which the goal leader is involved, as outlined in the Requirements section above.

Related GAO Work

GAO has elaborated on and suggested several practices that support this requirement, including:

- implementing the agency priority goal leader position, along with other leadership roles with specific responsibilities under the GPRA Modernization Act ([GAO-13-356](#));
- demonstrating management involvement ([GAO-05-927](#), pp. 19-20); and
- strengthening leadership commitment to creating and sustaining results-oriented management ([GAO-04-38](#), pp. 69-75 and 101-103).

Accountability for Unmet Goals

Requirements

Each year, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) is to determine which performance goals each agency did not meet based on targets set in agency performance plans, and submit a report on unmet goals to the head of each agency, the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, and the GAO. 31 U.S.C. § 1116(f).

Agencies are to take different actions depending on how long a goal has been unmet.

- The first year a goal is unmet, the agency is to submit to OMB a performance improvement plan with measurable milestones covering each unmet goal. The agency is to designate a senior official to oversee the performance improvement strategies to meet each unmet goal. 31 U.S.C. § 1116(g).
- The second consecutive year a goal is unmet, the agency is to submit to Congress a description of all the actions that will be taken to improve performance, which may include proposed statutory and, if OMB determines it is appropriate, funding changes. 31 U.S.C. § 1116(h).
- The third consecutive year a goal is unmet, OMB is to submit recommendations to Congress on actions to improve performance, including
 - reauthorization proposals for each program that has not met performance goals;
 - proposed statutory changes necessary for the program to achieve each performance goal; and
 - planned executive actions or identification of the program for termination or reduction in the President's Budget. 31 U.S.C. § 1116(i).

Select Legislative History

Where an agency has not met its performance goals, the Act requires that the head of the agency submit a performance improvement plan to OMB; where there have been unmet performance goals for two consecutive years, the agency head is required to submit additional information to Congress and to describe additional funding the agency will obligate to achieve the relevant goals. S. Rep. No. 111-372, at 16 (2010).

Related GAO Work

GAO has elaborated on and suggested several practices that support this requirement, including:

- using program evaluations to help measure or explain program performance ([GAO/GGD-00-204](#); [GAO/GGD-96-66R](#), pp. 8-10);
- identifying performance gaps ([GAO/GGD-96-118](#), pp. 32-34); and
- identifying how the findings of program evaluations are being used to improve performance for unmet goals ([GAO/GGD-96-66R](#), pp. 8-10).